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CH 655 Biographical Studies In Christian Leadership

Paul W. Chilcote

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CH 655
BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Spring Semester 2004
ATS Florida
Tuesday, 9:00-11:40 a.m.
paul_chilcote@asburyseminary.edu

Dr. Paul W. Chilcote
Office 407-482-7651
Home 407-971-9911
PWChilcote@cs.com

PURPOSE/DESCRIPTION

An examination of the lives of representative figures in the history of Christianity, specifically analyzing the essential features of their message and mission as Christian leaders in response to the challenges of their age. While broadly ecumenical in ethos, particular attention will be devoted to leadership within the Methodist heritage.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course, the student will be able:

1. to articulate a broad view of leadership roles and the influence of leaders within the history of the church;
2. to demonstrate an appreciation for the contributions of Christian leaders, both clergy and laity, to the ongoing life of the Christian community;
3. to show an awareness of and sensitivity to the particular contextual situations that elicited faithful and effective forms of leadership within the life of the church;
4. to demonstrate depth of knowledge with regard to a specific Christian leader who can function as a mentor for both spiritual growth and professional development today; and
5. to translate the discoveries of the course into practical forms/actions that will shape or inform contemporary ministry and promote sound leadership in the church.

SCHEDULE/OUTLINE

Feb. 10 Introductions & Syllabus
 A Spiritual Retreat on Prayer, Ministry, & Being Led

Reading: Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*

Feb. 17 Spiritual/Character Formation & Leadership
 Sustaining Spiritual Leadership

Reading: Hinson, *Spiritual Preparation for Christian Leadership*, 1-56,
 134-95
 McClendon, *Biography As Theology*, 13-38

Feb. 24 Interfacing Biography, Theology, & Leadership
 Case Study: Clarence Jordan

Reading: McClendon, *Biography As Theology*, 87-139

- Mar. 2 Applying a Wesleyan Lens: Principles, Practices, & Passions
A Spiritual Mini-Retreat on Knowing God, Proclaiming Christ, & Seeking Justice
- Reading: Weems, *Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit*
- Mar. 9 Hildegard of Bingen: A Feather on the Breath of God
Martin Luther King, Jr.: In Search of the Beloved Community
- Reading: McClendon, *Biography As Theology*, 65-86
Reading Options:
Newman, *Voice of the Living Light*
Phillips, *Martin Luther King, Jr. on Leadership*
Smith & Zepp, *Search for the Beloved Community*
- Mar. 16 NO CLASS
- Mar. 23 Dietrich Bonhoeffer: The Cost of Moral Leadership
Le Chambon: The Christ-like Character of a Village
- Reading Options:
Kelly, Nelson, & Bethge, *The Cost of Moral Leadership*
- SPRING READING WEEK*
- April 6 Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion
Peace Pilgrim: Wisdom Walk
- Reading Options:
Robert Coles, *Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion*
Canfield, ed., *Peace Pilgrim's Wisdom*
Peace Pilgrim: Her Life and Work In Her Own Words
- April 13 Two Student Presentations
- April 20 Two Student Presentations
- April 27 Two Student Presentations
- May 4 Two Student Presentations
- May 11 Two Student Presentations
- May 18 Towards a Theology of Christian Life & Leadership
A Celebration of the Christian Saints
Reading: McClendon, *Biography As Theology*, 170-215

RESOURCES

Required Texts:

- E. Glenn Hinson, *Spiritual Preparation for Christian Leadership*
Upper Room ISBN 0835808882
- James W. McClendon, *Biography As Theology*
Wipf & Stock ISBN 157910021X
- Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*
Crossroad ISBN 0824512596
- Lovett Weems, *Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit*
Abingdon ISBN 0687046920

Supplemental Texts & Reading:

Each student is required to read **one** of the following books:

- Robert Coles, *Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion*
Perseus ISBN 0201079747
- Geffrey Kelly, Burton Nelson, & Renate Bethge, *The Cost of Moral Leadership*
Eerdmans ISBN 0802805116
- Barbara Newman, ed., *Voice of the Living Light*
UC Press ISBN 0520217586
- Cheryl Canfield, ed., *Peace Pilgrim's Wisdom*
Blue Dove ISBN 1884997112
- Peace Pilgrim: Her Life and Work In Her Own Words*
Ocean Tree ASIN 0943734150
- Donald T. Phillips, *Martin Luther King, Jr. on Leadership*
Warner ISBN 0446675466
- Kenneth Smith & Ira Zepp, *Search for the Beloved Community*
Judson ISBN 0817012826

For successful completion of the course all students must read at least 600 pages in addition to the required texts. The supplemental text is to be included in this 600 page minimal requirement. In addition to the supplemental text, most of this reading will (but need not exclusively) focus on the particular Christian leader to be presented in the seminar by the student. All additional reading must be approved by the instructor. In order to obtain an "A-range grade" for the seminar, students must document their reading of at least 1,800 pages, 1,700 pages for a "B-range grade," and 1,600 pages for a "C-range grade." These reading requirements are to be considered minimal requirements and do not guarantee grades in and of themselves. Final grades are determined by performance on all requirements for the course as stipulated below.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

1. General Class Participation (10%)

Your lively and informed participation in all seminar activities is valuable for you and contributes to the edification of all. Active involvement in class will be taken into account in determining final grades, both in terms of presence and engagement.

2. Written Assignments (60%)

A) McClendon Reflection Paper (20%)

You are required to write a **4 page** reflection paper, interfacing Chapter 4 of the McClendon text and Part 3 of the Weems text. This synthetic exercise is due at the beginning of Session 4. The presentation format is open, but basic guidelines will be discussed on the first day of class.

B) Two Reflective Praxis Plans (20%)

You are required to write two **2 page** reflective praxis plans as follows:

- 1) For the first paper, select a theme from Lovett Weems, *Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit* that you wish to exemplify in your own ministry. Then discuss in concrete, practical terms how you hope to live this out in your life. Format is open.
- 2) For the second paper, reflect upon any one of the videos viewed in the class, by identifying a central characteristic or axial theme that you wish to exemplify in your own life. Then discuss in concrete, practical terms how you hope to accomplish this. Format is open.

Each plan is valued at 10% of your grade.

C) Book Report (20%)

You are required to prepare a **4 page** book report on one of the biographical studies listed in the syllabus under "Supplemental Texts," or any other work approved by the instructor. A formal guideline will be provided on the first day of class.

3. Seminar Projects/Presentations (30%)

Each student is required to make a 50 minute biographical presentation in class on a Christian leader of their own choosing, in consultation with the instructor. The schedule for these presentations will be finalized as quickly as possible in the semester. Exactly how each student uses this time is at their own discretion. Video materials may be used, active learning methods may be employed, first person dramatizations are welcome. Each student must turn in a one page summary handout related to the figure that is being introduced to the seminar and an annotated bibliography of resources related to the study of this figure, which may also include works published by this person. Both must be turned in two days prior to the presentation for copying. In addition, a paper of **10-15 pages**,

including the substance of the presentation must be turned in on the day of the presentation. It is not necessary, and, in fact, not preferred, that you read the paper as your presentation. The intention is that the paper represents your preparation for the presentation.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

Grading is based upon the following narrative criteria:

- A Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives
- B Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
- C Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives
- D Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives
- E Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

Also note the catalog policy regarding application for “Incomplete” work (p. 29).

I have known the Presence,
not merely in the illuminations which have lighted a darkened
path,
or in the guidance which has ended a dilemma at the parting
of the ways,
or in the ecstasies which give strength for weary plodding
miles.
God has also been a certainty in the probings which have
shamed,
and the purgations which have cleansed,
and the promptings which have demanded action,
from which earlier
both flesh and spirit have shrunk,
and against which all that is mortal has protested fiercely but
in vain.
There is an authenticity about these various and varied
communions
which not only communicates certainty
but makes one feel that this is what life was intended to be;
this is a foretaste of heaven;

**this it is which gives one an inkling
of what the saints mean when they say
"nothing matters but God."
(Albert E. Day)**